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INDUSTRIAL APPRENTICE SCHOOL IN RÂMNICU-VÂLCEA: ABOUT THE BEGINNING OF PROFESSIONAL INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION (1920-1925)

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Abstract: The industrial schools for apprentices and workers from 1920-1925, organized alongside local craftspeople's corporations and under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor, can be considered an important stage in the development of interwar workers' education. The experience from this stage was useful to decision-makers for the subsequent legislation and regulation of this form of education. Using various documentary sources, the article has as its main objective the reconstruction of a concrete example of the practical implementation of central policies regarding the education of the socio-professional category of apprentices and craftsmen. It aims to highlight the contribution that the experience of the industrial school in Râmnicu Vâlcea brought in clarifying some particularities of young people from the professional group of workers. At the same time, the article aims to highlight the contribution that the school had in designing solutions that would lead to ensuring a good school and life education for working-class youth.

Keywords: Ministry of Labor, Râmnicu Vâlcea, industrial school, socio-professional categories, working youth.

Introduction

At the end of the First World War, on the political scene of Greater Romania, the working class appeared as an important socio-professional category[1]. It had acquired a political role, a consequence of the legislation of universal male suffrage. It had an economic role, the country's recovery after the war and the development of the national economy also depending on the professional qualifications that the

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[1] A form of contextualizing the subject is also found in the Romanian language in Diana-Mihaela Păunoiu, *"Luminarea masei muncitoreşti prin şcoală": despre începutul învăţământului profesional industrial în Craiova (1920-1925)*, in "Arhivele Olteniei", new series, no. 38/2024, pp. 115-118.

workers had. At the same time, the labor movements at the end of the war (soldiers with numerous labor conflicts, strikes and lockouts and the blocking of economic activity[2]) and the penetration of extremist influences among the workers showed that this social category could become a "force" dangerous for the interests of the unitary Romanian state. These aspects, as well as others derived from the internal and international context of the time, forced the decision-makers of the Romanian state to find solutions that would regulate not only work and workers' problems, but also workers' education. "Enlightening the working masses through school", in the logic of the promoters of workers' education, meant the intervention of the state to raise the cultural and professional level of Romanian apprentices, workers and craftsmen in relation to that of "foreigners" in the Romanian industry and economy[3]. From an ideological point of view, in the early Romanian interwar period, social policies regarding work and the professional group of workers were circumscribed to the liberal conception/doctrine affirmed in the Romanian space after the Great War[4].

From this perspective, industrial apprenticeship schools can be classified as part of the "cultural offensive"[5] from the first interwar decade, which aimed to expand schools established by the state or from private initiatives (supervised and supported by the state) standardized according to national norms, with the role of ensuring cultural homogenization at the level of Greater Romania. At the same time, the "enlightenment" of workers through school was also a means of counteracting the influence of extremist movements among working-class youth: "From a social point of view, craftsmen form a solid conservative class, ..., on which the current structure of the State can be confidently based against any extremist ideas"[6].

The development of technical capacity and the regulation of the situation of workers (craftsmen or workers) in Romanian industry were the focus of the authorities in the Romanian space in the pre-war period as well. The debates regarding labor issues in the second half of the 19th century made their effects felt at the beginning of the 20th century when two important laws were adopted to regulate labor and

[2] In 1920, 753 labor conflicts were registered (490 in the Old Kingdom, 149 in Transylvania, 19 in Bessarabia and 3 in Bukovina); 35 lockouts (32 in the Old Kingdom and 3 in Transylvania); 123 latent conflicts, not degenerated into strikes or lockouts (5 in the Old Kingdom, 123 in Transylvania). I. Setlacec, *Legislaţia socială posterioară înfiinţării Ministerului Muncii*, in "Zece ani de politică socială în România 1920-1930", [Bucharest], Tipografia Eminescu, [1930], p. 77.

[3] Georgeta Ghionea, *Greek Entrepreneurs Former in Oltenia*, in Iulian Boldea, Cornel Sigmirean (eds.), *Identity and Dialogue in the Era of Globalization*, sections: Social Science, Târgu Mureş, Arhipeleag XXI Press, 2019, pp. 373-378; Ghionea Georgeta, *Repere social-economice în evoluţia urbană a oraşului Craiova*, in "Arhivele Olteniei", new series, no. 33/2019, pp. 117-131.

[4] See Victor Rizescu, *Doctrinele muncii și politica profesiunilor. Sindicalism, corporatism și cooperație în România interbelică*, Chișinău, Cartier Publishing House, 2025.

[5] Irina Livezeanu, *Cultură şi naţionalism în România Mare 1918-1930*, translated from English by Vlad Russo, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1998.

[6] N. P. Arcadian, *Industrializarea României: studiu evolutiv-istoric, economic şi juridic*, Bucharest, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, 1936, p. 93.

trades: The Law for the Organization of Trades of 1902 (Missir Law)[7] and the Law for the Organization of Trades, Credit and Workers' Insurance of 1912 (Nenitescu Law)[8]. Considering the fact that, immediately after the war, the organization of industrial apprentice schools began based on the last mentioned law, we specify that it stipulated, among other things, the employer's responsibility to support and promote the education of their apprentices outside the factory or workshop (art. 39: "The employer is obliged: 3. To take care of their [apprentices and journeymen's] moral and religious upbringing. 4. To force the apprentices and journeymen to go to the apprenticeship school of the corporation, factory or commune"). Also, art. 82 provided among the duties of the board of directors of a corporation and the tasks: "3. To establish or financially assist in establishing schools for apprentices in guilds and for journeymen, according to the programs approved by the Central House; 4. To urge the apprentices and journeymen of the corporation to go to church on Sundays and religious holidays, to visit industrial museums, exhibitions, factories, to attend conferences and specially designed courses"[9]. The law stipulated, among other things, the creation of a central institutional structure, the Central House of Trades, Credit and Workers' Insurance, which at the end of the war would constitute the nucleus around which the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection would develop[10].

After the war, workers' schools were established to educate working-class youth from urban industrial establishments. Apprentices and workers in factories and workshops were, depending on their schooling, of three categories: primary school graduates; those with incomplete primary education and illiterates. In the logic of the protagonists, workers' schools represented the continuation and completion of young people's education and had the role of forming both a professional and

[7] Lege din 5 martie 1902 pentru organizarea meseriilor – Legea Missir [Law of March 5, 1902 for the organization of trades – Missir Law]: https://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/lege-din-5-martie-1902-pentru-organizarea-meseriilor-legea-missir-emitent-parlamentu-publicat-n-160214.html, accessed on May 19, 2024.

[8] For details, see: Costel Gîlcă, *Noi teorii în dreptul muncii*, Bucharest, Rosetti Internațional Publishing House, 2012, pp. 76-96; Roxana Cristina Radu, *O filă din istoria dreptului muncii: statutul servitorilor şi muncitorilor agricoli în Oltenia primei jumătăți a secolului XX*, in "Arhivele Olteniei", new series, no. 37/2023, pp. 499-511; Cezar Avram, Roxana Radu, *Evoluția istorică a reglementărilor privind relațiile de muncă în România*, in "Arhivele Olteniei", new series, no. 22/2008, pp. 181-204. For the debates on the Romanian political scene regarding labor issues and labor associationism, see: Alin Burleac, *Începutul experimentului corporatist în România: corporațiile în perioada 1902-1914*, in "Transilvania", no. 8/2023, pp. 52-66, https://doi.org/10.51391/trva.2023.08.08; Roxana Cristina Radu, *From the History of Employment Law in Romania: Elaboration, Adoption and Implementation of Law on Children's and Women's Labor in Industrial and Mining Establishments from 1906*, in "Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane «C.S. Nicolăescu-Plopşor»", no. XVI/2015, pp. 71-84.

[9] Lege pentru organizarea meseriilor, creditului şi asigurărilor muncitoreşti din 27 ianuarie 1912 – Legea Nenițescu [Law for the organization of trades, credit and workers' insurance of January 27, 1912 – Nenițescu Law]: https://legislatie.just.ro/public/DetaliiDocument/160213, accessed on May 19, 2024.

[10] D. Constantinescu, *Istoricul organizării Ministerului Muncii*, in "Zece ani de politică socială în România 1920-1930", ..., p. 14.

civic culture, as well as a national identity at the level of this socio-professional category. They were supposed to give society: "enlightened citizens, honest workers and with perfect skill in the trades they will exercise"[11].

In the first part of the interwar period, workers' education entered the sphere of activity of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection[12], established on March 30, 1920: the workers' education department had the role of coordinating and facilitating the technical and civic training of apprentices ("endowing the apprentice with a civic conscience"[13]), while the guidance of popular education activities aimed at organizing the workers' free time with cultural-artistic activities.

The culturalization and education of workers was pursued, from the beginning, along two lines of action: "instruction and education in a didactic sense, through schools, and from this concern emerged the ever-growing establishment of workers' education; and secondly, general training, for understanding the cultural moment and the scientific and artistic values of humanity, in addition to the obligation and age or connection with school, and from this concern emerged the office of libraries working class (...)"[14].

Apprentice schools were established in categories: industrial apprentice schools; practical commercial schools; special schools (construction, fine arts, etc.) and workshop schools. In the first interwar decade, the number of workers' schools increased constantly. If in the 1920-1921 school year there were 80 schools at the national level, in 1929-1930 there had been 150 schools[15]. In the 1923-1924 school year, workers' education in Oltenia, organized under the aegis of the Ministry of Labor, included eight schools, of which: six were industrial schools for apprentices and adults (Caracal, Craiova, Drăgășani, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Slatina and Turnu Severin)

[11] Dolj County Service of National Archives (SJAN Dolj), Constantin C. Putureanu Fund, file no. 7, f. 17.

[12] It was established in the context of social policies promoted by the International Labour Organization, created after the war, as well as from the internal need to establish an institutional structure that would coordinate the legislative unification and the unitary application of the normative framework at the level of Greater Romania. The ministry initially included several directions: labor, insurance, cooperation, assistance and the social museum. In the first interwar decade, it bore several titles, depending on the fields it coordinated: in 1922, the health services joined the ministry, and its title changed to "Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection". In 1923, it was split into: the Ministry of Labor, Cooperation and Social Insurance and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. This split lasted until 1929, when the two ministries were unified under the title: the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Protection.

[13] I. Răducanu, *Zece ani de activitate a Ministerului Muncii*, in "Zece ani de politică socială în România 1920-1930", ..., p. 4.

[14] Emanoil Bucuța, *Biblioteci și publicații muncitorești. Referat la Congresul de la 28 Noemvrie 1926*, in "Buletinul Muncii, Cooperației și Asigurărilor Sociale", year VII, no. 9-12, September-December 1926, p. 531. In 1926, 60 workers' libraries regularly received books and magazines from the Ministry of Labor, and 30-40 libraries received partial aid. In workers' centers, where professional organizations had not managed to establish their own libraries, the Ministry sent books to any public library upon request to be of use to the workers, *Ibidem*, p. 532.

[15] Stavri C. Cunescu, *Educația și ocrotirea muncii*, in "Zece ani de politică socială în România 1920-1930", ..., p. 209.

and two were for girls and women – an industrial school for apprentices (girls) in Craiova and an industrial school for apprentices (girls) and adults in Râmnicu Vâlcea[16].

The students of the workers' schools were apprentices from industry or commerce, graduates of primary school. The courses were in the evening, with a duration of 3 years. For illiterate apprentices and for those who had not completed the primary course, adult schools were established in addition to the industrial schools (dependent on the Ministry of Labor until March 1, 1925, when they came under the authority of the Ministry of Education). The teaching staff was made up of: teachers and professors from the state's public education and engineers, doctors, architects and various technicians from industry and commerce[17].

Constantin C. Puţureanu played an important role in implementing the objectives of the central state authorities regarding the education of working-class youth in Oltenia. He was appointed by royal decree on February 1, 1919, as sub-inspector of the local structure of the Central House of Trades, Credit and Workers' Insurance, and on May 1, 1920, as regional inspector within the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection[18]. Proof of the appreciation and trust that Puțureanu enjoyed in Bucharest is also the correspondence he had with the central authorities. In a letter dated February 15, 1921, Stavri Cunescu (who, at the time, was general director in the Ministry of Labor) considered that the inspector's activity in establishing the apprentice school in Craiova and the one in Râmnicu Vâlcea was important and encouraged him to expand and support the establishment of a school in Turnu Severin (Mehedinți county)[19].

Having as its main objective the revealing of a concrete example of the transposition into practice of the central policies regarding the education of the socio-professional category of apprentices and craftsmen from Râmnicu Vâlcea, the documentary materials used for the historical reconstruction and the analysis of the issue are diverse. To contextualize the subject, we used specialized works and the codifications of the time regarding the social policy of work organization. Mainly, for the actual analysis of the issue addressed, we used archival documents from the Dolj county structure of the National Archives, which were preserved due to the concern of the civil servant Constantin Puțureanu to collect and preserve relevant documents about his activity (but also about his life, in general). Based on these, we reconstructed the establishment, organization and functioning of the Industrial School for Apprentices and Workers in Râmnicu-Vâlcea, highlighting its importance for the socio-professional category from which the students came,

[16] "Buletinul Muncii, Cooperației și Asigurărilor Sociale" – Organ al Ministerului Muncii, Cooperației și Asigurărilor Sociale, year V, no. 1, Januarie 1924, pp. 53-55.

[17] Stavri C. Cunescu, *Educaţia şi ocrotirea muncii*, in "Zece ani de politică socială în România 1920-1930", ..., pp. 210-211.

[18] For an overview of the life and work of C. C. Puţureanu, see: Diana-Mihaela Păunoiu, Alin Mitrică, *Momente din viaţa lui Constantin Puţureanu (1882-?)*, in "Arhivele Olteniei", new series, no 24/2010, pp. 123-140.

[19] SJAN Dolj, Constantin C. Putureanu Fund, file no. 7, ff. 49-49v.

as well as the joint effort of representatives of several socio-professional categories (civil servants, teachers, employers, etc.) in supporting this type of education during the 1920-1925 period.

Operating Regulation of the Industrial Apprentice School No. 1 in Râmnicu Vâlcea

After the war, workers' education was organized in Râmnicu Vâlcea under the local craftsman's corporation, under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and under the initial coordination of Constantin Puțureanu, the regional inspector of the Ministry of Labor. The Regulation[20] for the functioning of the industrial school in Râmnicu Vâlcea was approved by the General Directorate of Labor, according to order no. 4,956 of September 14, 1920.

According to art. 1 of the Regulation, the Education Directorate, attached to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, based on art. 82, paragraph 3 of the Law for the Organization of Trades of 1912 "establishes in this city, in addition to the local corporation, an Industrial School for apprentices". In the future, depending on local needs, other schools could be established.

Art. 2 defined the purpose of the school: "to give craftsmen a rational technical education, to raise their morale and to complete them – as far as possible – with the necessary knowledge, so that they can become both conscious citizens and craftsmen of value for themselves and for the national industry"[21]. Operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor meant its supervision regarding the attendance of enrolled students, as well as the teaching of courses from the school program, approved by the ministry (art. 3).

The courses were free, hold in the evening, with a duration of two years. Upon graduation, students obtained a certificate issued by the school management, according to the form approved and endorsed by the Education Directorate of the Ministry of Labor (art. 4, 9-10)[22].

Any apprentice and industrial worker up to the age of 19 could register. Registrations were made at the corporation office. The documents required for registration were: insurance receipt books, birth certificate or school [graduation]

[20] The Operating Regulations of the Industrial School in Râmnicu Vâlcea were identical to those of the Industrial School of Apprentices in Craiova, which was established around the time of the establishment of the Ministry of Labor. In the context in which the two schools were established under the coordination of the regional representative of the central institutional structure in Bucharest, the regulations of the two schools are identical, differing only in the central institutional name under which they were established: the Central House of Trades, Credit and Workers' Insurance, within the Ministry of Industry and Trade for the school in Craiova and the Education Directorate of the Ministry of Labor, Cooperation and Social Insurance for the school in Râmnicu Vâlcea. See, for the regulations of the school in Craiova, Diana-Mihaela Păunoiu, *"Luminarea masei muncitoreşti prin şcoală"*…, in loc. cit., pp. 118-119.

[21] SJAN Dolj, Constantin C. Putureanu Fund, file no. 7, ff. 8-8v.

[22] *Ibidem*, ff. 8v., 9v.-10.

certificate, as well as, in the case of those who did not have a contract, proof from the employer regarding seniority as a craftsman and specialty (art. 5).

Students – apprentices and workers registered at the school were obliged: to attend classes regularly, to respect the announced schedule, to participate in conferences held within the school; to maintain order in the classroom, to be attentive to the courses taught, to always have a decent behavior towards the teaching staff, their colleagues and colleagues from higher classes (art. 6-7).

Teachers could take measures to eliminate students who showed disobedience or indecent behavior in the classroom. Also, students of the Industrial School were required to behave appropriately outside of school. Those who did not have a "dignified attitude in society" could be expelled from school. Such cases were reported to the local Labor Inspectorate Office (art. 7)[23].

The regulation also stipulated the obligation of employers to support the education of their apprentices and workers, referring in this regard to art. 39, paragraphs 3-4 of the Law for the Organization of Trades of 1912. Employers ("taking into account the legal obligations, but also the purpose of the school, the personal interest in having conscientious workers, as well as the national interest in ensuring progress in national industry"[24]) were obliged to guide apprentices and workers to attend these schools and to allow them to report to school one hour before the end of the working day (art. 12).

Any other issues not provided for in the regulation, regarding the functioning of the industrial school, were resolved by the respective Inspection Service of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (art. 13)[25].

Socio-professional categories reflected in the organization, management and teaching staff of the school

According to the report on the organization and evolution of the school in the years 1920-1925, drawn up by the director Iosif Andreescu, the apprentice school in Râmnicu Vâlcea was founded on November 1, 1920. Prior to this date, between December 1919 and June 1920, Sunday conferences had been held by several personalities' representative of the working world, including C. Nedoviceanu, accountant, and C. Puțureanu, inspector within the Ministry of Labor, the latter having the task of founding the industrial school[26].

On October 28, 1920, a meeting with the owners of factories and workshops in Râmnicu Vâlcea (those who had responded positively to the invitation) took place at the headquarters of the local corporation. After they were shown the need to establish an apprentice school in the city, the school ephoria was elected. The school opened on November 1 in the presence of the prefect of Vâlcea County,

[23] *Ibidem*, ff. 8v.-9v.
[24] *Ibidem*, f. 10.
[25] *Ibidem*, f. 10v.
[26] *Ibidem*, ff. 37-37v.

Tr. Mihailescu; Al. Popa, the mayor of the commune; C. Puțureanu, on behalf of the Ministry of Labor; I. Nicolescu, subinspector of insurance; members of the teaching staff, the ephoria committee and several craftsmen and apprentices: "The prefect, the mayor, the labor inspector, the president of the corporation, Mr. N. Popescu-Păușești and Iosif Andreescu, urged in short and warm speeches, the owners, to support the school and the apprentices to come to classes regularly"[27].

The establishment of the school and its subsequent operation was the result of the joint effort and involvement of representatives of several socio-professional categories: civil servants from the Ministry of Labor and its local structures, local authorities (mayor, prefect), commercial officials, teachers and instructors from state public education, lawyers, engineers, employers, as well as representatives of workers and craftsmen. The "people" of the school, representatives of various professional categories, are involved either in the management of the school, seeking the best solutions to raise the funds necessary for the operation of the school, or by donating significant amounts, or by getting involved by assuming the role of teacher to transmit knowledge to the school's students, or by conducting surveys at the apprentices' workplaces to see if they have optimal conditions and their rights are respected.

The school ephoria was established on October 28, 1920. The first ephoria had as president Vasile Georgescu (mechanical locksmith), president of the craftsman corporation, as vice-president I. Niculescu (sub-inspector of workers' insurance), as cashier Dumitru Apreotesei (typistol and bookseller), as well as the following as members: Vasile Săndulescu, Dietrick Speck (carpenter), Tache Ionescu (mechanical locksmith), C. Budeanu (carpenter), D. Bădulescu (cobbler), Pârvu Lepădatu (carpenter) and Alexandru Pârvu (tailor).

The members of the school ephoria were renewed through annual elections. For the 1924-1925 school year, it had the following composition: Mitică Simian[28](great industrialist), president; Vasile Georgescu and I. Niculescu, vice-presidents and five members: Eugenia Inătescu, director of the industrial apprentice school; Dănilă Puschilă, strap maker; Dumitru Prădatu, abagiu; Ion Nicolae, tailor and Alex. Pârvu, tailor.

During the period 1920-1925, three members were permanently on the committees of the ephory: Vasile Georgescu, I. Niculescu and Alexandru Pârvu[29].

The activity of the school ephoria was important for the proper organization and functioning of the industrial school in the city. Its members constantly advised

[27] *Ibidem*, f. 37v.

[28] For more details, see Georgeta Ghionea, *Glimpses from the past of an old family from Rm. Vâlcea: Simian family*, in "Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane «C.S. Nicolăescu Plopşor»", Craiova, no. 17/2016, pp. 71-78; Georgeta Ghionea, *Istoria băncilor urbane din Oltenia în date, statistici, şi corespondenţă (1880-1948)*, Târgoviște, Cetatea de Scaun Publishing House, 2015, pp. 76-96.

[29] SJAN Dolj, Constantin C. Putureanu Fund, file no. 7, f. 43.

the employers to send their apprentices to school and to contribute to their regular school attendance. Also, in the first two years, the funds necessary for the maintenance of the school were collected through the care of the members of the ephoria, who organized public collections and celebrations. In the following three years, the collection of the necessary funds was also the result of the efforts of the ephoria committee, with the ephoria president Mitică Simian standing out in this direction, helped by Eugenia Inătescu, the director of the industrial school for apprentices. The total amount collected in the five years by the school ephoria from balls, celebrations and donations was 95,985.45 lei. To this was added the sum of 43,000 lei, representing donations made, in 1923-1925, by the city hall, led by mayor Gogu Ștefănescu. Of the total funds available to the school in those five years, the largest part was spent on purchasing books, notebooks and supplies that were given to the students free of charge every year, as well as on ensuring the lighting, heating and rent of the premises[30].

The school management maintained permanent contact with the local authorities, inviting them annually to the opening or end-of-school-year celebrations. However, they had only participated in the festivities in the first two years. During the rest of the period under review, the school's relationship with the authorities had been reduced to meetings with the city mayor, in which the school management requested financial aid from the city hall[31].

The industrial school operated in several locations; in the 1920-1921 school year, in the "Costeanu" reading room made available, together with the furniture, by N. Popescu-Păușești, the head of the library; from 1922 until December 1, 1924, in the premises of the Primary School for Boys and from December 1, 1924 until the end of classes in 1925, with rent, in the premises of the Primary School for Girls and in the premises of the school management. In the last two locations, the ephory of the industrial school had taken care of installing electric lighting from its own funds[32].

The school had an administrative body consisting of: members of the school ephoria, director Iosif Andreescu and five secretaries: D. Morariu (November 1, 1922 – January 1, 1923); D. Tomescu, teacher (March 1, 1923 – July 1, 1923); Virgil Popescu, headmaster (October 1, 1923 – July 1, 1924) and D. Pușchilă (September 1, 1924 – July 1, 1925)[33].

The teaching staff experienced several changes in the five years of operation. The only one who constantly served the industrial school was Iosif Andreescu (teacher, graduate of the Normal School), who was both director and teacher of the school, teaching: Latin, Geography, Romanian Language and Music. The other members of the teaching staff were in the service of the school for periods of time.

[30] *Ibidem*, f. 43v.
[31] *Ibidem*, f. 44.
[32] *Ibidem*, ff. 37v.-38.
[33] *Ibidem*, f. 42v.

Thus, C. Georgescu, master carpenter, graduate of the Higher School of Trades, taught Technology and Specialty Course, for 4 years.

Among the members of the teaching staff who taught for three years were: N. Ceaușeanu, teacher, graduate of the Normal School, taught Mathematics at the Industrial School; N. Dobre, professor, graduate of Sciences, teacher at the Normal School (Physical – Chemical Sciences and Mechanics); D. Tomescu, licensed teacher, teacher at the Normal School and High School (Romanian Language) and Andrei Livezeanu, lawyer, licensed in Law (Legislation).

Among the teachers of the industrial school, who taught for two years, are: priest Grigore Rădoescu[34], teacher (Romanian Language); Constantin Mihăilescu, high school teacher (Geometric Drawing); Lazar Moldoveanu, master of the Trades School (Industrial Drawing) and Al. Arghiropol, draftsman at the Romanian Railways, graduate of the Higher School of Trades (Technical Drawing).

Among the teachers of the industrial school, who taught for a year, are: N. Popescu-Păușești, lawyer (History and Geography); I. Teodorescu, commercial clerk (Accounting), Alfred Cernea, architect (Drawing and Technology), Petre Drăgoescu, high school teacher (Romanian Language); Romulus Antonescu, director (Accounting); D. Fane, master of the Trades School (Iron Technology); Eugen Melinescu, Seminar teacher (Physics and Chemistry); I. Minculescu, master of the Trades School (Mechanics and Iron Technology), Virgil Popescu, primary school teacher; T. Geantă, teacher (Music); priest M. Bulacu, teacher (at the adult section); P. Rozianu, headmaster, (Mathematics) and C. Gh. Nicolescu, director of the "Cozia" Federal School (Accounting)[35].

The reasons for the instability of the teaching staff were diverse: moving to another locality, professional overload, many being teachers at day schools, evening classes were poorly paid: "The main reason that determined the teachers to retire after a while was the heavy workload in the evening hours. For some, it may have also been the weakening of the enthusiasm with which they had initially started the action of enlightening the working class"[36].

Class organization and student situation

Courses were held between October 1st[37] and June 15-20, including the exam period. They were organized in the evening, between 5 and 7 p.m. The total number of hours varied over the five years, but increased significantly from year to year. Thus, if in the first year a total of 131 hours were recorded, in the last year 1,580 hours were completed[38].

[34] After two years he retired, as he had established a school for apprentices, of which he became director and professor.

[35] *Ibidem*, ff. 41v.-42.

[36] *Ibidem*, f. 42v.

[37] Except for the first school year, which began on November 1, see *Supra.*

[38] *Ibidem*, ff. 39-39v.

In 1920-1925, the school had two sections: the industrial section and the adult section. The adult section had, in all years, two groups: one for illiterate students and one for incomplete primary school students, which functioned together, however. As an exception, the two groups were separated in November-December 1924, and in January of the following year they were reunited due to lack of funds. From March 1, 1925, the adult section was placed under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. By this date, 263 students had been enrolled, of whom: 21 had not attended school, 30 had withdrawn, 35 had irregular attendance, 177 had regular attendance and 122 had passed[39].

The industrial section had a variable number of classes, depending on the needs that arose. The number of classes in the industrial section constantly increased, due to the large number of apprentices enrolled and coming to school. Thus, if in the 1920-1921 school year there was one class, in the 1924-1925 school year there were six classes (Table no. 1). The division was made taking into account the relatedness of the trades. In classes I A and II A, students from: carpentry, cooperage, wheelwrighting, locksmithing, blacksmithing, upholstery and topography were enrolled. They were taught more knowledge of technology and industrial design than those in classes B and C. In the year 1924-1925, the following were enrolled in class I B: shoemakers, belters, furriers and tanners, and in class I C, apprentices from the other trades[40]. From a statistical point of view (Table no. 1), in the industrial section, less than half of the total number of students enrolled in 1924-1925 had passed.

Table no. 1

Statistics[41] with the situation of students from the industrial section for the school year 1924-1925

Class	Enrolled	Absenteeism	Withdrawn	Irregular attendance	Regular attendance	Admitted to the exam	Graduated	Failed	Repeating	Postponed until the fall, they don't have documents
I A	62	2	9	16	35	40	32	5	3	11
I B	51	3	7	8	33	26	22	2	3	14
I C	49	7	7	2	33	24	21	1	1	12
II A	36	-	3	4	29	24	19	4	1	9
II B	37	4	3	-	30	21	17	2	2	9
III	28	5	1	5	17	16	11	3	2	6
Total	**263**	**21**	**30**	**35**	**177**	**151**	**122**	**17**	**12**	**61**

Source: SJAN Dolj, Constantin C. Putureanu Fund, file no. 7.

[39] *Ibidem*, ff. 38-38v.
[40] *Ibidem*, f. 38.
[41] *Ibidem*, f. 38v.

In 1920-1925, the Industrial School for Apprentices in Râmnicu Vâlcea had registered a progressive increase in enrollment and attendance at both sections, this positive aspect being due to the fact that there was permanent contact between the school administration and the employers. Also, many employers had become accustomed to the idea of a school for their apprentices, the progress being also a consequence of the fact that in the last two years the courses had been mandatory. On the other hand, some students had not attended school at all because the employers had not allowed them to come to school, and others had attended it irregularly also because of the employers, who kept them in factories and workshops beyond the legal work schedule. Also, the withdrawal of some students from school was a consequence of the fact that some apprentices abandoned learning the trade and returned to their parents, and others finished their apprenticeship before finishing school and did not come to school anymore[42].

The school program also included extracurricular activities. In all years, celebrations were organized at the beginning and end of the school year. In the second school year, the teaching staff held a series of Sunday conferences during the winter. In the 1924-1925 school year, a sports-cultural society was established with apprentices and workers. Although it had not managed to establish its own workers' library, the industrial school committee purchased and donated to the "Costeanu" public library in the city a series of books suitable for the needs of craftsmen's lives. The excursions represented a failure in the field of extracurricular activities of the apprentices. They could not be carried out either due to lack of funds or because the employers did not allow the apprentices to be absent for such activities[43].

The establishment of a workers' museum of the school remained a desideratum. The students, who were also apprentices in the carpentry and blacksmith workshops, had executed several works that could have constituted a starting point for the formation of a museum. However, due to the lack of space, the school management decided to sell the works executed by the students, and the money obtained was used for the benefit of the school. Also, due to the fact that the school did not have its own premises, the teaching material at its disposal was very limited: 25 drawing boards, 6 compass boxes, 20 tees (small drawing rulers), 10 squares, 2 maps, a pendulum and a few machine parts necessary for industrial drawing. The teaching material and the school archive were kept at the principal's house. For other teaching materials, the material of the Primary School, in the premises of which the industrial school operated, was used on loan[44].

Conclusions of the investigations regarding the working and living conditions of apprentices-students

As we mentioned above, the success or failure of an apprentice-student depended greatly on the employer's attitude towards the school, on his willingness

[42] *Ibidem*, f. 39.
[43] *Ibidem*, ff. 42v.-43.
[44] *Ibidem*, f. 41.

to allow his apprentices to access the school. An important aspect that emerges from the report prepared by the director Iosif Andreescu is related to the fact that the school management frequently conducted investigations in factories and workshops to inquire about the situation of the apprentices-students. From those investigations, a series of irregularities related to the non-compliance with the regulatory framework in force, as well as the inhuman conditions that some employers based their "care" on their apprentices, emerged.

Thus, regarding the work schedule, it was recorded that the industrial school's hours were evening, because otherwise: "the employers would not have consented. They believe that they are sacrificing too much of their interests when they let the apprentices leave work at 7 o'clock. Some even try to compensate for the loss by bringing the apprentices in after 9 o'clock in the evening. I often found – in the raids I made – apprentices working at around 11 o'clock at night. The authorities in charge of enforcing the laws protecting and regulating the work of apprentices tolerated and still tolerate this abuse"[45]. Following investigations into working hours, it was found that in printing workshops, carpentry factories, at the Romanian Railway depot and in several locksmith workshops, work was done for 8-10 hours a day. On the other hand, especially in shoemaking, tailoring, lampshade making and candle making workshops, the work was excessively long, with apprentices working from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m., with only 6 hours of rest. The repeated protests that the school management made to the respective employers, as well as the fines applied by the regional authorities of the Ministry of Labor to several of the employers, led to a decrease in the number of those who forced their apprentices to work beyond the legal limits[46].

Also, during the investigations carried out by the management of the industrial school, it was found that the employers did not provide optimal living conditions for their apprentices, which affected their health, vigor and physical development, overall, with negative consequences in the long term: "In terms of physical appearance, the condition of the students leaves a lot to be desired. 70-80% are weak, pale, tired and underdeveloped. (…) regarding the food they receive from the employers (95% of the students are supported by the employers). We found that some are fed sufficiently, but we found that most receive only one type of food at lunch and dinner. In the morning, they receive nothing. We found students who are fed only with beans and polenta every day. And it is precisely these who are forced to work harder, both at their job and at various chores near the respective employers' houses. One of these students – a very good boy – "both in teaching and in behavior – has hunched over during the three years of apprenticeship and has a haggard and aged face"[47].

The situation was no different in terms of the hygiene conditions in which the apprentices lived. Surveys conducted during the enrollment of the apprentices

[45] *Ibidem*, f. 39.
[46] *Ibidem*, f. 40.
[47] *Ibidem*, f. 39v.

at the school revealed that: "Most of them live in hardship; crowded into small, dusty and poorly ventilated workshops. Some sleep in these workshops on makeshift beds made from a few boards, without clean bedding and with thin blankets. Most of them have torn and dirty clothes. In winter they shiver from the cold. They don't even bathe"[48].

All these negative realities regarding the life of apprentices were opposite to the direction of social policies initiated by the Romanian state authorities in order to develop the professional category of Romanian workers and, in the long run, the Romanian economy. The negative realities recorded in the school's report were, in essence, alarm signals that the director Iosif Andreescu transmitted to the central authorities, also emphasizing the negative consequences that would have appeared in the long term: "These living conditions hinder the physical development of future craftsmen, weaken them, drain their physical and spiritual powers, make them incapable of withstanding harder work, kill their pleasure in work and the desire for perfection, and age them prematurely. Of course, with such craftsmen, industrial production will not be able to prosper and the fight against competitors who do it to us with foreign products is impossible. The soldiers recruited from among them will not have enough energy to resist during the hard battles"[49].

Other important aspects for the evolution of the Romanian working class, which emerged in the five years of operation of the Industrial Apprentice School in Râmnicu Vâlcea, referred to the fact that education had to be adapted to the particularities and level of development of working-class youth: "From the point of view of the level of knowledge with which students come to classes, we found that most students have knowledge inferior to that which a primary school graduate should generally have. This proves that the mediocre elements in primary school are more likely to go into trades. Few come from the best graduates. (…) the intellectual development of students is slow. Few are those who thoroughly assimilate the knowledge taught. What is pursued and retained is mainly the knowledge that they understand and feel is useful to them"[50]. In the industrial school in Râmnicu Vâlcea, some progress had been made in the teaching-learning process as teachers became familiar with the necessities of "craftsman life" and with the students' power of understanding, as well as through the gradual introduction of specific textbooks.

These adaptations had to take into account not only the curriculum and the act of teaching, but also the introduction of norms of conduct that would help young people to acquire civilized behavior in society. Many of the apprentices entered the school with a behavior shaped by the harsh regime in the workshops where they worked and therefore "they have a disorderly behavior, lacking a sense of respect and decency; they are rough, unsociable, talk trivially, etc."[51]. Gradually,

[48] *Ibidem*, f. 39v.
[49] *Ibidem*, f. 40.
[50] *Ibidem*, ff. 40-40v.
[51] *Ibidem*, f. 40v.

however, as a result of the advice they received at school, most of them changed their behavior: "Those in the third-year force themselves to appear serious, dutiful, conscientious. They have been made to understand that they must have a model behavior, in order to form a tradition in school and later in society, and that is why they control their behavior. Their influence is also exercised on others. The sense of dignity, to which we appeal very often, develops and becomes an inhibiting power against vile and immoral impressions"[52].

After five years of school experience, the director of the Industrial School of Apprentices in Râmnicu Vâlcea also drew up a series of findings-proposals regarding this form of education. The director addressed the following proposals to the competent authorities: establishing dormitories for apprentices; granting financial funds for their own premises; establishing libraries next to dormitories or next to workers' schools; measures against employers who torment apprentices with bad food and excessive work; measures against corporations that issued journeyman or worker's books to apprentices who did not provide proof that they had regularly attended school; developing an analytical program for industrial schools, as well as introducing Scouting, for the formation of moral, sanitary and civic education[53].

The situation of graduates of workers' schools, under the authority of the Ministry of Labor, was regulated by the law of March 1925. Graduates of these schools, as well as those from the 1924-1925 series, received graduation certificates issued by the management of the industrial schools, with the approval of the Ministry of Labor. By 1930, based on this law, following a rigorous examination by a commission appointed by the Ministry of Labor, over 5,000 graduation certificates were issued throughout the country[54]. Also, graduates of industrial apprentice schools received the same rights as graduates of lower trade schools and elementary trade schools. Thus, they obtained: reduction of military service to one year and obtaining the title of capacity as workers or the craftsman's book, without any other formality[55]. Later, the law [56] of 1936 will also regulate other aspects (such as the situation of the teaching staff) of the industrial workers'

[52] *Ibidem*.

[53] *Ibidem*, f. 44.

[54] Stavri C. Cunescu, *Educaţia şi ocrotirea muncii*..., p. 212. For the conditions that graduates had to meet to obtain certificates, see Diana-Mihaela Păunoiu, *"Luminarea masei muncitoreşti prin şcoală"*…, in loc. cit., p. 125.

[55] Lege pentru reglementarea situaţiunii absolvenţilor şcolilor industriale de ucenici şi a şcolilor practice de comerţ, depinzând de Ministerul Muncii, Cooperaţiei şi Asigurărilor Sociale, promulgată de regele Ferdinand la 28 martie 1925 [Law for regulating the situation of graduates of industrial apprenticeship schools and practical trade schools, depending on the Ministry of Labor, Cooperation and Social Insurance, promulgated by King Ferdinand on March 28, 1925], in "Monitorul Oficial", part I, no. 71, March 29, 1925, p. 3395.

[56] Lege pentru organizarea şi funcţionarea învăţământului secundar industrial (Şcoli profesionale şi de meserii) din 16 aprilie 1936 [Law on the organization and functioning of secondary industrial education (vocational and trade schools) of April 16, 1936], in C. Hamangiu, *Codul general al României*, vol. XXIV *Coduri, legi şi regulamente cuprinzând prima parte din legislaţiunea anului 1936*, part I, Bucharest, Monitorul Oficial şi Imprimeria Statului, Imprimeria Centrală, 1937, pp. 555-556, 566-567.

education organized by the Ministry of Labor for apprentices and workers who could not attend the professional and trade schools organized by the Ministry of Education.

Conclusions

The industrial schools for apprentices and workers from 1920-1925, organized alongside local workers' corporations and under the authority of the Ministry of Labor, can be considered an important stage in the development of interwar workers' education. The experience from this stage was useful to decision-makers for the subsequent legislation and regulation of this form of education. From this perspective, the Industrial School for Apprentices from Râmnicu Vâlcea, like several other schools in Oltenia and the rest of the country, contributed: to clarifying some particularities of young people from the professional group of workers, to highlighting the need to adapt the teaching-learning process according to those particularities; to signaling several problems in the employer-apprentice relationship, derived from the failure to comply with the normative framework regarding work and, last but not least, it contributed to designing solutions that would lead to ensuring a good school and life education for working youth.

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